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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 002327

PLEASE USAID AFGHAN ASSISTANCE TASK FORCE -- JAMES BEVER
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/06/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [AF](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: MOFA PONDERES NEXT STEPS ON AFGHANISTAN ASSISTANCE

Classified By: CDA James P. Zumwalt per reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) In an October 5 meeting with Embassy Political Minister-Counselor and Poloff, MOFA Middle Eastern and African Affairs Director General Toshiro Suzuki discussed possible next steps in Afghanistan assistance. MOFA is weighing three questions in that regard: 1) How to further the expansion of Afghanistan's infrastructure; 2) Assisting the Afghan government in capacity-building; 3) Facilitating the reconciliation of lower-echelon insurgent fighters.

¶2. (C) While infrastructure and capacity-building are well within the scope of Japan's more traditional development assistance models, Suzuki was more animated in discussing how Japan might apply lessons learned in Disarmament, Decommissioning and Reconciliation (DDR) programs in other conflict zones to Afghanistan. He noted the importance of vocational training and providing a livelihood to former insurgents as being essential in preventing lower-echelon fighters from taking up arms again. He said that Japan has valuable experience in vocational training that could be applied, adding that Prime Minister Hatoyama is very interested in these sorts of programs.

¶3. (C) In the context of reconciliation and DDR programs, Suzuki mentioned that former NHK journalist and peace-building scholar Daisaku Higashi would be joining the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) staff before the end of the year. Higashi is a doctoral candidate at the University of British Columbia whose dissertation addresses the construction of domestic legitimacy by international peacekeeping efforts in war-torn states.⁸ According to Suzuki, although Higashi has traveled extensively in Afghanistan, he has not been in contact with the Taliban.

¶4. (C) Suzuki cautioned, however, that the Hatoyama administration's budget priorities remained unclear as the budget process for the coming year had just begun. Given that the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) seems predisposed to reduce the GOJ budget, Suzuki thought it would be difficult to project what level of Afghanistan assistance would be forthcoming. Current GOJ spending on Afghanistan assistance is between USD 400 million and 500 million, but the Ministry hoped to increase the level to more than USD 500 million, he said.

¶5. (C) Suzuki said he had been surprised by recent reports that FM Okada was considering using increased Afghanistan reconstruction assistance as a means to gain concessions from the United States on base relocation issues in Okinawa. The two issues are complicated enough, and linking them will make resolution even more difficult. Moreover, Japanese support for OEF is a multilateral effort, while the base relocation are a bilateral issue.

ZUMWALT